



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 June 2026

by **A O'Neill BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 July 2026

Appeal Ref: 6005634

Land Adjacent Broad View, Old Woods, Walford Heath, Shrewsbury SY4 3AX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant permission in principle.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Tim Jones, Ridgeway Properties Ltd, against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/03565/PIP.
 - The development proposed is 3 affordable dwellings and 3 open market dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and permission in principle is granted for the development of 3 affordable dwellings and 3 open market dwellings at Land Adjacent Broad View, Old Woods, Walford Heath, Shrewsbury SY4 3AX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 25/03565/PIP.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposal is for permission in principle (PiP). Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that this is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or PiP) establishes whether a site is suitable in principle, and the second, technical details consent (TDC), stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed. It is the granting of TDC that has the effect of granting planning permission for the development. This appeal relates to the first of these two stages.
3. The scope of the considerations for PiP is limited to location, land use and the amount of development. All other matters are considered as part of a subsequent TDC application if PiP is granted.

Main Issues

4. Therefore, the main issues are whether the location, land use and the amount of development is suitable, with particular regard to:
 - the Council's strategy for the location of housing and the site's access to services and facilities; and,
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The Council's strategy for the location of development is set out in the Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy 2011 (the CS) and the Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development 2015 (the

SAMDev). SAMDev Policy MD1 sets the strategic approach to the location of development in the district, directing development to the most sustainable locations.

6. The appeal site is located in Old Woods, which is a small rural hamlet consisting of a linear cluster of residential properties and which is located in open countryside for the purposes of planning policy. CS Policy CS5 and SAMDev Policy MD7a limit new residential development in the open countryside to a number of exceptions, none of which are applicable to this proposal. As such the site location does not accord with the Council's strategy for the location of housing.
7. I have had regard to the appellant's suggestion that the appeal site has a functional relationship with Walford Heath which is located to the west of the appeal site. Walford Heath is identified as a community cluster which the SAMDev confirms is a location suitable for additional development. Additionally, SAMDev Policy MD3 makes provision for additional development outside of settlement boundaries in certain circumstances.
8. The Council states that Policy MD3 only applies where sites physically adjoin the cluster. Although this is not explicitly stated in the policy, as I observed on my site visit, the distance between Old Woods and Walford Heath and the intervening countryside means that they are two distinct settlements. Whilst it is stated that school children from Old Woods walk to the school bus service in Walford Heath, this does not, in my judgement, constitute a functional relationship to justify the proposed development in the terms of Policy MD3. Accordingly, this does not alter my conclusion that the appeal site location does not accord with the Council's strategy for the location of housing.
9. With respect to the site's access to services and facilities, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) expects development to promote walking, cycling, and the use of public transport, while recognising that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas. It is common ground that there are no facilities within Old Woods. Future occupiers would need to travel to Bomere Heath or Baschurch which are each more than two miles from the site, or to Shrewsbury which is more than 5 miles from the site, to access a range of services and facilities.
10. There is no dedicated pedestrian or cycling infrastructure in the vicinity of the site and the roads are unlit. In this context, given the distance, it is unlikely that walking or cycling to Bomere Heath, Baschurch or Shropshire would be an attractive option for all future occupiers, particularly during the winter months.
11. A bus stop is located approximately 250 metres from the appeal site providing bus services to Baschurch in around six minutes and to Shrewsbury town centre in around 17 minutes. The service operates approximately every hour during weekdays, although the service is less frequent on Saturdays and there is no service on Sundays.
12. Whilst I recognise the absence of footways and streetlighting, the walking distance to the bus stop is relatively short. During my site visit I observed the road to be lightly trafficked and, although my visit can only represent a snapshot in time, there is no substantive evidence before me that what I saw was not untypical. In the context of the Framework's acknowledgement that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, although future occupiers may be likely to rely on

private vehicles for most journeys, they would also have access to a reasonable level of public transport as an alternative for some journeys.

13. Taking all of the above into account, whilst I have found that future occupiers would have access to some sustainable transport to access services and facilities, the proposal would conflict with the Council's strategy for the location of housing. Thus, the proposal would conflict with CS Policy CS5 and SAMDev Policies MD1 and MD7a, as set out above.

Character and Appearance

14. The appeal site is a rectangular parcel of undeveloped land, located to the north of a narrow road. The site's boundary with the road is defined by a dense hedgerow. There is a low timber fence at its northern boundary, beyond which is undeveloped countryside land. There are existing residential properties to the east and west of the site. To the south of the site, on the opposite side of the road there is a ribbon of residential properties. Beyond this linear cluster of development there is undeveloped open countryside land. The area therefore has a rural character and appearance to which, in its undeveloped state, the appeal site makes a positive contribution.
15. Whilst the detailed design and layout of the appeal development would be determined at the TDC stage, it would result in built development where there is presently none and the proposed residential use would alter the visual appearance of the site. The resultant development and domestication of the land would change its character.
16. Nevertheless, development on the appeal site would infill a gap between the existing residential properties to the east and west. Moreover, the amount of development proposed could be accommodated on the site in a linear layout, which would not appear at odds with the prevailing layout and type of development in the area. Indeed, the evidence before me indicates that the Council did not object, on character and appearance grounds, to a previous proposal for a linear residential development on the site (Development Management Report for Application Number 13/00639/FUL).
17. Accordingly, I find the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposal would not conflict with CS Policy CS6 or SAMDev Policy MD2. Taken together, these policies seek development which respects local context and character, and which responds appropriately to the form and layout of existing development.

Other Matters

18. The Council confirms that there is an acute affordable housing need in Shropshire. The description of the proposal includes three affordable units. Whilst it is not possible to secure this at the PiP stage, there is nothing before me to suggest it could not be secured at the TDC stage. As such, I find no conflict with CS Policy CS11 which requires on site affordable housing provision for sites of five or more dwellings. I therefore recognise the appellant's intention to deliver three affordable units as a benefit. However, as this would not be secured until the TDC stage, I attribute it lesser weight in the planning balance.

19. My attention has been drawn to the appeal decision for the previous development proposal on the site (Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/A/13/2205598). That decision was made some 12 years ago, prior to the adoption of the SAMDev and in line with a previous version of the Framework. The main issue in that appeal related to whether the site was in a suitable location for housing and, at the time of that decision, the Inspector concluded that the identified harms did not outweigh the benefits. As I have set out above, in the context of the current version of the Framework, which acknowledges that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, I find that the bus service would offer an alternative to the private car for some journeys. This is consistent with the Inspector's findings on a more recent appeal decision on a nearby site on the same bus route (Appeal Ref: 6002055). Furthermore, the previous proposal on the site included only one affordable unit, whereas the current proposal includes three affordable dwellings. Consequently, the detail of the two proposals, and the policy framework against which they must be assessed, differ materially. I therefore afford only limited weight to the findings of the previous appeal and do not consider that decision to be determinative of the outcome in this case.
20. I have had regard to the comments from interested parties which raise concerns in relation to surface water flooding, safety and the suitability of the surrounding rural roads for additional traffic. However, these are matters which would be addressed at the TDC stage. There is no compelling technical evidence before me to indicate that PiP should be withheld. Moreover, planning permission would not exist unless both PiP and TDC are granted.
21. Concerns regarding the information contained in the planning application and the way in which the Council consulted on it are not in the scope of this appeal.

Planning Balance

22. Whilst I have found that the proposed use and amount of development would be acceptable in principle, the proposal would conflict with the Council's strategy for the location of housing set out in CS Policy CS5 and SAMDev Policies MD1 and MD7a. The proposal therefore conflicts with the development plan as a whole.
23. The Council has confirmed that it cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. The appellant has cited a figure of 3.81 years, and this is not disputed by the Council. In this circumstance, paragraph 11 of the Framework is engaged, whereby planning permission should be granted unless (i) policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a strong reason for refusing the development, or (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, and having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations. There is nothing to suggest 11(d) (i) is relevant to this case, hence the balance in 11(d) (ii) applies.
24. I accept that there would likely be a reliance on private vehicles for access to services and facilities. Nevertheless, I have found that future occupiers would have access to a reasonable bus service as an alternative for some journeys to nearby settlements. This would align with paragraph 110 of the Framework which acknowledges that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas. Furthermore, paragraph 83 of the Framework recognises that where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one

village may support services in a village nearby. This limits the weight I attribute to the proposal's conflict with the Council's strategy for the location of housing.

25. The Framework seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing provision and identifies that small and medium sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement for an area. Six dwellings would therefore make a positive contribution in this regard. Economic benefits would also arise from employment during the construction works, and occupation of the new units through additional expenditure in the area. Given the scale of the proposal, I attribute these benefits modest favourable weight. The provision of three affordable dwellings secured at the TDC stage would also be a benefit, albeit attracting lesser weight in the planning balance given it would not be secured until the TDC stage.
26. Thus, in this case, the adverse impacts of the conflict with the development plan would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. Therefore, the proposal would benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development, set out at paragraph 11 of the Framework. The Framework is a material consideration of significant weight and, in this case, indicates that a decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, having regard to all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that permission in principle should be granted.

Conditions

27. A number of conditions were suggested by consultees to the planning application. However, the PPG makes it clear that it is not possible for conditions to be attached to a grant of permission in principle. Therefore, I have not imposed any conditions.

Conclusion

28. The proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. However, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is a material consideration which outweighs that conflict. Material considerations therefore indicate that a decision should be taken which is not in accordance with the development plan. Accordingly, the appeal should be allowed.

A O'Neill

INSPECTOR